



CTAHPERD

March 6, 2016

S.B. 378 (Raised) An Act Concerning the Recommendation of the High School Graduation Requirements Task Force.

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

As current Past President of the Connecticut Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (CTAHPERD) I am concerned about the potential impact of S.B. 378, which calls for the elimination of .5 health education credit from the state graduation requirement. I am writing to urge you to vote "NO" on this bill. This proposed bill will negatively impact quality Health Education in Connecticut and the well-being of our younger generations in the following ways:

- I. Loss of Title IV funding. Removal of the credit will negate the new ESSA law in which health just became recognized as a critical component to a student's "well rounded" education with the availability of funding opportunities.
- II. Without a required comprehensive quality Health Education requirement, student behaviors such as smoking, heavy drinking, school misbehavior, drugs and violence will become more prevalent in our state.
- III. Loss of support under the The Affordable Care Act in Health Education that teaches students to self-advocate and make healthy choices.

If we want to build a healthier Connecticut we must celebrate the recognition of health under ESSA as a critical component of a student's education instead of eliminating it. Research has shown that quality health and physical education instruction improves student attendance, test scores, participation, motivation to learn and reduces discipline referrals. Evidence also shows that effective school health education provides students with a foundation for a lifetime of health, wellness and character development.

A comprehensive Health Education program plays a critical role in promoting social and emotional learning in students. It provides opportunities for students to develop and practice important health life skills such as goal setting, assertiveness, resisting peer pressure, social awareness and empathy, communication skills, managing emotions and anger and stress management. According to a 2010 report from the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers, social-emotional learning is critical to the introduction of college and career readiness standards which increase the demands on students' ability to engage in deeper learning.

I urge you to make a firm commitment on the health of our future generations and vote "NO" on S.B 378. Your continued support of quality health education along with requiring a health education credit as a requirement for graduation will set the standard for promoting healthier schools in Connecticut. Thank you for your time and service as a member of the Education Committee.

Sincerely,

John Battista
CTAHPERD Past President